Green Card Scheme

2419. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state.

(a) whether it is a fact that Germany has extended Green Card Scheme for Overseas Information Technology specialists to work in Germany,

(b) if so, the details thereof,

(c) whether any limit has been prescribed for issue of work permits under the Green Card Scheme; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD). (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The German Federal Cabinet approved the extension of the so-called "Green Card initiative" for foreign IT specialists First time applications can be submitted until 31st December, 2004. The new imigration law passed by the German Parliament on 9th July, 2004, aims at attracting skilled workers into Germany including in knowledge based areas and provides for the possibility of offering permanent residence status to highly qualified specialists and foreign university graduates.

(c) and (d) There is no prescribed time limit for issue of work permits under the Green Card Scheme. However, the new regulation cancels the earlier fixed maximum limit of 20,000 work permits.

Mail processing

2420. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY. Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state·

(a) whether it is a fact that to ensure a dedicated mail transmission system to cater to the special customer needs, local mail has been segmented from non-local mail;

(b) if so, the details thereof, and

(c) what mechanism the Postal Department is adopting in mail processing with the help of Information Technology?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The local mails are being segmented from non-local mails in all metros and major towns for both ordinary mail and speed post articles. The local ordinary mail is handled through Green Channel. Green Letter Boxes are installed for posting and collecting of local ordinary mails for next day delivery. There are instructions to all Postal Circles to make special arrangements for next day delivery of local speed post articles.

(c) Automatic Mail Processing Centres have been installed at Mumbai and Chennai for processing of local mails as well as other mail. A web based track and trace system called 'Speed net' is operational for tracking the speed post articles and consignments.

Undersea cable by VSNL

2421. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that VSNL has, recently, started working on laying 3175 kms. of undersea cable in the Indian seabed between India and Singapore;

(b) if so, the details of bandwidth capacity of the cable; and

(c) by when, the project is expected to be completed and become commercially operative?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) VSNL is implementing a submarine fibre optic cable system known as the Tata Indicom India-Singapore Cable System (TIISCS) linking Chennai in India to Singapore. The design capacity of the cable system is 5.12 Tbps.

(c) This project is likely to be ready for service by the end of financial year 2004-05.